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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Turkey

DATE:

INFO. 9 November 1946

SUBJECT Foreign Interest in the Inheritance of Sultan Abdul Hamid II

DIST. 27 December 1946

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PAGES 2

ORIGIN

SUPPLEMENT

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1. Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909, the third from the last of the Osmanli to rule) left to his sons when he died an inheritance which would have been enormous, had the heirs been able to acquire it in the usual fashion.
2. It consisted largely of his private properties - vast territories formally registered with the Turkish landed property office, and spread over various zones of the old Turkish (Ottoman) Empire.
3. The fall of the Empire and the advent of the Turkish Republic (1923) prevented the heirs from coming into possession of these inherited properties, in spite of their legal titular rights.
4. With the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire, many of these territories fall under the jurisdiction of other states subsequently formed which denied the validity of the heirs' claims, in view of the size and the political importance of the estates.
5. As an example of the great value of the zones of the inheritance, it is enough to point out that they include most of the oil concessions and the tilled land of the old Ottoman Empire (Mosul, etc.), and in addition, about one-seventh of the territory of Palestine, one-third of the best land in Syria, almost all of the oil zone in Iraq, and various lands, rights and properties in Greece, Albania, Tripolitania, and Cirenaica.
6. The various heirs (descendants of the Sultan compelled to live abroad after the advent of the Turkish Republic) several years ago formed corporations (Consolidated Eastern Corporation, Ltd.; Arosotec Estates Consolidated, Ltd.; Karilom Ltd.) with shares distributed in proportion to inheritance claims, and with the end in view of winning their rights.
7. This was done on the advice of Nicola Politis, a Greek lawyer.
8. The leader of the heirs is Prince Mahmud Namuk, who lives in Alexandria, Egypt, as the virtual guest of his cousin, the Khedive.
9. One of the principal heirs was Sultana Pertvenial Valideh, mother of Abdul Aziz (1867-1876), who had married an Albanian prince (her second marriage) and died in Albania a few years ago.

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CLASSIFICATION

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10. Abdul Hamid's grandson is Prince Cahid Osman, who lives in Nice and is an old friend of the lawyer Guido Botto.
11. For many years the heirs have been living on funds given to them by a group of London financiers, in exchange for half of the shares of the Consolidated Eastern Corporation and the Arosotec Estates Consolidated, and 20% of the shares of the Karilom Ltd. It appears that this concession brings them in an annual income of 5,000 Sterling, a sum divided among the heirs (details are not available).
12. The heirs have recently renewed their attempts to acquire at least a portion of the property belonging to them and the acknowledgement of some of their rights, or the recognition of their claims by the states concerned.
13. Politis suggested that they take their claims to court, and they did win one lawsuit in the Turkish Supreme Court.
14. Prince Namuk's recent trip to Italy was to endeavor again to regain some of his rights. Tancredi Botto was to approach him in his capacity as representative of his father, Guido Botto, (Cahid Osman's lawyer). Unfortunately, there was a mix-up in correspondence whereby they failed to meet at the Grand Hotel in Rome. Therefore, Namuk returned to Alexandria without having contacted Botto.
15. Prince Namuk's lawyer is Charles Grimaldi of Grasse; Cahid Osman's lawyer is Guido Botto.
16. It is noteworthy that the Soviet government recently asked Prince Namuk to cede all the rights and claims of the heirs for the sum of two million Sterling. The heirs would have been glad to accept this offer, had they not received at the same time a warning from the British not to take such a step.
17. It appears to be the intention of Prince Osman to interest some foreign financial group in the matter. The war has heretofore prevented him from taking any steps in this direction.
18. At present Prince Namuk is probably trying to obtain a more direct intervention to secure the recognition of the rights of the heirs by the various governments concerned. With the Italian defeat, hopes have been renewed for the reclaiming of property in Tripolitania and Cirenica.

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